

# Polly Wolly Doodle

American Folk Song

**F**



1. Oh, I went down South for to see my Sal, Sing - ing  
2. Oh, my Sal, she is a maid - en fair, Sing - ing

**F C7 C7**



Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day; My Sal, she is a  
Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day; With curl - y eyes and

**C7 C7 F**



spunk - y gal, Sing - ing Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day.  
laugh - ing hair, Sing - ing Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day.

**REFRAIN F C7**



Fare thee well, fare thee well, Fare thee well my fair - y fay,



For I'm goin' to Loui - si - an - a, for to see my Su - sy -

**C7 F**



an - na, Sing - ing Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day.

## SINGING

Let students enjoy the fun of singing nonsense words and humorous verses. Soloists could be chosen to sing the written verses with the class joining in on the *Polly Wolly Doodles* and the Refrain. Some singers might make up their own words entertaining their friends in the same manner as Calypso singers do.

Change to a faster tempo when students seem to be comfortable with the song. Singing *For I'm goin' to Louisiana for to see my Susyanna* could turn out to be a humorous tongue twister for some children. Be sure the *Louisiana* is pronounced Loo-zee-ann-a

## PLAYING

Tune your autoharps! Never was a two-chord song as easy to play as this one. Notice that the chord changes occur on the rhyming words *day* and *fay*. Help students make the chord changes easily by practicing the timing. While singing, tap shoulders on the beat until the word *day*, and then move the beat to the knees, tapping there until the next change on the word *day*. The next two changes are on the words *fay* and *day*.

Try to have several autoharps (in tune with each other) for children to play, and have students strum one beat per measure. Notice that the F and C7 are not marked on every measure. Just keep strumming the chord you begin with until a change occurs. At a faster tempo there may only be time for one strum every two measures.

## CREATING

More doodling could be done on recorders or bells or glockenspiels. Notice the long tones and rests at the ends of phrases. Experiment with eighth-note trills on the pitches C and D and create a little musical motif there. A motif might also work after each *Fare thee well*.

## LISTENING

Play the F chord on the autoharp and sing the first phrase, ending it without changing the chord to C7. The G you are singing will sound very dissonant with the F chord. Can the students hear that chord needs to be changed? Change to C7 and go on to the next phrase end holding the last note (F) which will sound very dissonant with the C7 chord. Again, let the ears of the students guide them to tell you to change the chord. You could then continue the song asking them to give you signals to change the chord such as described in the PLAYING section above. Intentional mistakes on your part will provide clues as to how well students hear the chord changes.

## CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Steamboats on the Mississippi River in the 1800s served many purposes. On the famous excursion boats, sometimes called "Floating Palaces, the purpose was entertainment. "Polly Wolly Doodle" was one of the most popular songs of that time, and was no doubt sung there and throughout the surrounding states.

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